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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI AND NEA/PI, ABU DHABI FOR MEPI

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [KMPI](#) [KU](#) [MEPI](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR BRIEFS EU MISSION CHIEFS ON MEPI; EU  
REPORTS GCC RESISTS EUROMED PARTICIPATION

REF: A. KUWAIT 1465

[1](#)B. 04 STATE 271434

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The Ambassador hosted a meeting with EU Chiefs of Mission to discuss Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) projects in Kuwait as well as on-going Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) programs. The EU Chiefs reported the difficulty they had in convincing the GCC to participate as "strategic partners" in the Euromed initiative. The discussion revealed various initiatives coming from several organizations but limited coordination among the BMENA participants. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) The Ambassador hosted 13 EU Chiefs of Mission April 11 to discuss the MEPI program and Kuwait's involvement. He described MEPI's reform goals and emphasized the program's support from the White House, Congress and Department. While somewhat active in MEPI, Kuwait has not been involved to the same degree as other countries given its relative wealth and lack of officially-recognized non-governmental organizations. Kuwait has participated in MEPI small grants, standing program announcement programs and regional conferences. The Ambassador introduced Post's MEPI coordinator as a point of contact for additional program information.

[1](#)3. (SBU) In contrast to U.S. efforts, it appears that the European Union, with the exception of the United Kingdom, is less engaged in Middle East reform efforts in the Gulf. Aside from MEPI, the only other bilateral effort addressed was the UK's Global Opportunity Fund, which focuses on various thematic program areas such as counter-terrorism and "engaging the Islamic world." The British Embassy has used the Fund, created post-September 11, to sponsor three workshops in Kuwait in 2004 focused on women's development in media, lobbying and networking skills. They have also sent Kuwaitis to the UK for conferences.

[1](#)4. (C) The meeting addressed G-8, NATO, BMENA and EU initiatives related to Middle East reform. The EU's Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, also known as Euromed, launched in 1995 as the "Barcelona Process." It currently links the EU with 10 Mediterranean countries (including the non-Arab states of Israel and Turkey) in security, economic and cultural affairs. The EU would like to expand Euromed participation to the GCC, but the proposal received a cool reception at the April 5 EU-GCC Ministerial in Bahrain (reftel A). Oman and Saudi Arabia were notable resisters to the "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East," adopted by the European Council in June 2004, asserting that EU-GCC relations are primarily commercial and questioning the inclusion of non-economic matters, which Euromed would require.

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LEBARON